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Addendum

Programme questions: proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005

(Item 4 (a))

Section 29
Management and central support services

1. At its 18th, 19th and 20th meetings, on 23 and 24 June 2003, the Committee for Programme and Coordination considered section 29, Management and central support services, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005 (A/58/6 (Sect. 29A) to (Sect. 29G)).

2. The representatives of the Secretary-General introduced section 29 and responded to queries raised during the Committee's consideration of the budget section.

Discussion

3. General support was expressed for the programme of work proposed under section 29 (A-G) for the biennium 2004-2005. Views were expressed in support of focusing the management practices of the Department of Management on accountability and for the proposals for investment in training and development of staff and in information and communications technology. On the other hand, views were expressed that the reform of the Secretariat should be implemented without an increase in resources and that the efficiency gains from the system improvements and the resources released from the discontinuation of obsolete and ineffective outputs and activities should be utilized for reform. The crucial role of information

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and communications technology in improving the functioning of the Secretariat, being the backbone of the Organization and the global link in bringing duty stations together, was specifically emphasized. Satisfaction was expressed for increased use of teleconferencing as a management tool, in view of its impact on productivity and reduction in operational costs. The importance of the sharing of best management practices among duty stations and the realization of the potential of common services arrangements in increasing the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the support services were emphasized.

4. The introduction of performance measures to the results-based budgeting framework was noted and generally supported. It was pointed out that some indicators of achievement were somewhat vague or imprecise in formulation, and that some established targets reflected only marginal improvement over the performance in prior bienniums. It was also pointed out that some indicators of achievement were too generic to measure the expected accomplishments and that they should focus not only on client satisfaction or utilization of resources, but also on cost efficiency and effectiveness of services. It was suggested that indicators of achievement within section 29 should be further refined so as to constitute measurable guidelines that would allow achieving a higher level of efficiency and performance, and that the possibility of using indicators targeting expected efficiency savings could also be considered. It was noted that no performance measures were proposed in the results-based budgeting framework in the area of executive direction and management of the section. Views were expressed that some of the identified external factors, in particular those reflecting interdepartmental interaction, were, in fact, internal factors and, as such were within the prerogative of the Secretary-General to manage.

5. Concern was expressed about the matter of whether cooperation of departments and offices of the Secretariat could be considered an external factor.

6. Deep disappointment was expressed about the fact that programme managers for the management and central support services budget sections had not implemented fully regulation 5.6 of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation (PPBME) by deleting from their proposals outputs and activities that are obsolete, irrelevant, ineffective, or marginally useful. In this context, the view was expressed that the repatriation grant provided to retiring United Nations staff members had become obsolete after 50 years and needed to be reviewed.

7. Appreciation was expressed for the incorporation into budget section 29 of the Secretary-General's reform initiatives, including the discontinuance of the *Repertory of Practice of United Nations Organs* and the transfer of the secretariats of the Fifth and the Sixth Committees to the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management. On the other hand, views were also expressed that the discontinuance of those activities was not mandated by the General Assembly.

8. With regard to section 29A, Office of the Under-Secretary-General for Management, it was pointed out that the Management Policy Office seemed to have a limited role to play in improving the administration processes, and it was suggested that the Office should be more proactive. The proposed measures for strengthening the area of administration of justice were generally welcomed, but with the indication that the programme narrative relating to the administration of

justice should be revised to reflect the provisions of General Assembly resolution 57/307 of 15 April 2003.

9. With regard to section 29C, Office of Human Resources Management, a view was expressed that the focus of the programme of work on staff training, although seen as positive, was not endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 57/300 of 20 December 2002 and that the issue should be considered by the Assembly at its fifty-eighth session. Views in support of the proposed measures for intensifying training and development of staff were also expressed. Strong support was expressed for the goals towards gender balance and equal geographical representation of staff in the Secretariat. Views were expressed that those goals should be reflected in the expected accomplishments and indicators of achievement, and that non-representation and underrepresentation of countries by staff in the Secretariat should be measured not only in terms of number of countries, but also in terms of level of representation. The view was also expressed that a performance measure of indicators of achievement should be added to reflect fully the provisions of General Assembly resolutions 55/258 of 14 June 2001 and 57/305 of 15 April 2003 on human resources management. A view was further expressed that not all the six indicators of achievement approved in the medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005, as revised, were reflected in the results-based budgeting framework under section 29C, and that accountability and vacancy planning should be more clearly taken into account. It was also noted that the actions taken by the Office of Human Resources Management in response to the recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions as outlined in table 29C.15 were too general in nature.

10. With regard to section 29D, Office of Central Support Services, support was expressed for the efforts towards ensuring wider participation of developing countries and countries with economies in transition in the United Nations procurement process. A view was expressed that a corresponding accomplishment should be included in the logical framework with its own quantitative performance indicator, and that the indicator should express a measure of the value that wider representation of those countries would add to the procurement process. With regard to the provision of information technology services proposed for 2004-2005, it was pointed out that the measurement of return on investment to the proposed activities, and the status of implementation of information technology projects in the context of the information technology strategy could be better reflected in the programme narrative. It was also pointed out that the programme budget proposals under section 29D did not sufficiently reflect the scope of benefits arising from proposed technological upgrades. Views were expressed that the mandated reductions in the area of information technology had long-term negative implications on the functioning of the Organization and they should be avoided in the future. A view was also expressed concerning the need to review the United Nations travel policy arrangements regarding business-class travel.

11. With regard to section 29E, Administration, Geneva, section 29F, Administration, Vienna, and section 29G, Administration, Nairobi, the need for periodic self-evaluation of activities by the respective administrative units with a view of benefiting from the lessons learned was pointed out. Views were expressed that the administrative services of the United Nations Office at Geneva, the United Nations Office at Vienna and the United Nations Office at Nairobi should be more

proactive in expanding and improving common services arrangements with respect to the administrative services provided within a duty station.

12. With regard to section 29G, the Committee welcomed the efforts by the Secretary-General to strengthen the United Nations Office at Nairobi, noting that those measures would allow the release of extrabudgetary resources of UNEP and UN-Habitat from the administrative activities, for reprogramming for their substantive activities. Views were expressed that those efforts should continue on a consistent and comprehensive basis in line with relevant General Assembly resolutions.

13. It was noted that the total regular budget component of resources under section 29G would, for the first time since the establishment of the Office, exceed the amount of extrabudgetary resources. It was recognized that that approach was in line with General Assembly resolutions 54/249, 56/253 and 57/292, as well as with the expressed intention of the Secretary-General to strengthen the Office in order to ensure that it was able to execute its mandated programmes and activities. It would further ensure that the financial and related arrangements of the Office would be steadily brought into line with those of other United Nations administrative offices, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 52/220 of 22 December 1997. Views were also expressed that the United Nations Office at Nairobi should continue to intensify its efforts to facilitate the holding of all meetings of the Nairobi-based bodies in Nairobi, as directed in paragraphs 9 to 11 of section II of resolution 57/283 B, except as otherwise expressly authorized by the General Assembly or the Committee on Conferences acting on behalf of the General Assembly.

Conclusions and recommendations

14. **The Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the programme narrative of section 29, Management and central support services, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 2004-2005, subject to the modifications set out below, as well as the provisions contained in the report of the Committee on the Foreword and Introduction.**

Table 29A.5

In indicator of achievement (c), add the word "efficient" before the words "support services".

Table 29A.8

In *Objective 1*, replace the words "Secretary-General's vision for reform" with the words "reforms in the United Nations".

In *Objective 1*, add a new indicator of achievement to read: "Level of satisfaction expressed by the intergovernmental organs", with a new corresponding performance measure reading: "Periodic surveys among Member States".

Table 29A.10

Under *Expected accomplishments*, after the word "cases", add "related to disciplinary affairs, claims and appeals of the staff".

Table 29B.5

In the *Objective*, after the word "procedures", insert the words "contained in the Financial Regulations and Rules and the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation".

Table 29B.8

Under *Objective 1*:

Add a new expected accomplishment to read: "Better implementation and compliance by departments and offices of the Secretariat of Financial Regulations and Rules and the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation", and a corresponding new indicator of achievement to read: "Fewer findings by the oversight bodies of non-compliance with the Financial Regulations and Rules and the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation and other approved budgetary procedures and guidelines for the regular budget, peacekeeping budgets, extrabudgetary resources and budgets of the Tribunals".

Under *Objective 2*:

In indicator of achievement (a), after the words "travel claims", add the words "payroll, insurance, invoices and claims processing".

Add a new indicator of achievement to read: "The availability of financial reports by the required dates".

Table 29B.10

Under *Objective 1*:

Change indicator of achievement "(b)" to "(b) (i)", and add a new indicator of achievement to read: "(b) (ii) Availability of budgetary documents by the required dates".

Under *Expected accomplishments*, insert a new expected accomplishment (c) to read: "(c) Improved compliance with regulation 5.6 of the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation". After indicator of achievement (b) (ii), insert a new indicator of achievement to read: "(c) Number of sections of the proposed programme budget for 2006-2007 that reflect a number of outputs deleted because they are obsolete, irrelevant, or of marginal usefulness".

Paragraph 29B.31

Under subparagraph (a) (ii) after the words "measures to encourage payment of assessed contributions and related issues", add the words "if mandated".

Table 29C.9

At the end of the expected accomplishment, after the word "information", add the words "taking into account Article 101 of the Charter".

At the end of indicator of achievement (ii), add the words "taking into account Article 101 of the Charter".

Under indicator of achievement (iii), *Performance measures*, before "Number of unrepresented Member States", add a new performance measure, reading "Level of underrepresentation of Member States: to be determined".

Paragraph 29C.22

Under subparagraph (a) (ii), after the words "gender balance," add the words "geographical representation,".

At the end of subparagraph (b) (i) e, add the words "and taking into account planning for replacement of retiring staff".

Table 29D.5

At the end of expected accomplishment (a), add the words "improving application of the Financial Regulations and Rules and the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation".

In indicator of achievement (a) (iii), replace the word "Full" with the words "Effective and efficient".

Table 29D.12

The *Objective* should read: "To ensure efficient, effective, diversified procurement opportunities and high-quality procurement services for the Organization."

Add a new expected accomplishment (c) to read: "Improvement in efforts to diversify United Nations suppliers", and a corresponding new indicator of achievement to read: "Number of new suppliers registered".

Table 29E.12

At the end of expected accomplishment (f), add the words "and improvement in efforts to diversify United Nations suppliers".

Paragraph 29F.20

At the end of subparagraphs (a) and (b), after the words "issues" and "staff", respectively, add the words "observing the principle of geographical representation, taking into account Article 101 of the Charter".

Table 29G.12

At the end of expected accomplishment (f), add the words "and improvement in efforts to diversify United Nations suppliers".

Tables 29E.6 (Objective), 29E.8 (Objective 1), 29F.7 (Objective), 29F.9 (Objective 1), 29G.6 (Objective), 29G.8 (Objective 1)

At the end of the objectives, add "with the goal of achieving greater efficiency and effectiveness of operations".

Add a new indicator of achievement to read: "Savings achieved from efficiency measures".

15. **The Committee took note of the proposal to integrate the technical secretariats of the Fifth and Sixth Committees into the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management and recommended that the proposal be further considered by the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session in the context of the proposed programme budget for 2004-2005.**

16. **The Committee recommended that at its fifty-eighth session the General Assembly be provided with information on performance measures relating to table 29C.9 on the level of underrepresentation of Member States.**

17. **The Committee urged an increased level of simplicity, transparency and effectiveness of administrative procedures in procurement activities at the United Nations Office at Vienna.**

18. **The Committee reiterated that the sound administration and management of the United Nations Office at Nairobi should help in strengthening the presence of the United Nations in Africa.**